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UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT  
OF AGRICULTURE

*Radio Service*

OFFICE OF  
INFORMATION

HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Wednesday, May 21, 1941

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "KEEPING UP HOUSEHOLD APPEARANCES." Information from the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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'Remember a few weeks ago when you were spring housecleaning? And you said "My, what a job! How I hate housecleaning!" Everything was topsy-turvy, and you didn't think it would ever be straight again...Neither did your family.

Well, there's a new style in housecleaning these days - a kind of 'preventive housecleaning' that modern homemakers believe in and practice. Maybe you know about it and practice it too. Today the U. S. Department of Agriculture reports some suggestions its farm security home supervisors give women in its borrower families on "keeping up household appearances."

"Keeping up household appearances" simple means getting your house in order and keeping it that way. You don't want another siege of spring or fall cleaning so you take measures to prevent it. For one thing you probably work on your walls and floors. You might not go to the extremes a Colorado woman did, but this woman papered some old walls with pasteboard from boxes. The plastering was cracking and falling off, so she cut up pasteboard into neat panels and squares and nailed it to the wall. Then she pasted cloth over the cracks and applied a coat of calcimine. The room looked much better.

Another farm woman had very bad floors. They were rough and full of splinters, grooves, and cracks, and were naturally hard to keep clean. So she bought herself some linoleum and covered them. She couldn't afford the inlaid type so she bought the printed kind and put a coat of shellac over it. The shellac protected it, and kept the color and design from wearing off so fast. Also it made it easier to clean, and she renewed it whenever necessary.



Speaking of floors, most families track a lot of dirt in the house from outdoors - especially if there are children around. It's hard not to, when there aren't any walks or the yard is just bare ground. But that's a situation almost anyone can remedy. You can make walks - 'make them out of boards, brick, stone, or gravel and have them lead right to the doors. And you can plant some grass too, or sod the yard, and maybe transplant some native shrubbery to help anchor the soil.

If your yard is uneven or in bad condition, level it off - fill in the low places and drain the mud holes. Have a metal scraper at each door for muddy shoes and boots. Shoe scrapers aren't old-fashioned and most farms need them. Have a good door mat too - one for every door. Some women make their own door mats - like from cornshucks or bottle caps.

In the home, there are a lot of little repair jobs that can make housecleaning easier and 'last longer.' For instance, the housewife can see that every door swings easily and doesn't drag or sag. She can be sure door knobs, locks, bolts, and latches are in good condition. She can fix loose hinges, replace cracked or broken window panes, renew ragged stair treads, and repair or rebuild old banisters and railings.

Also in the house, she can look over her furnishings and see what are just dirt and dust collectors. She can get rid of a lot of bric-a-brac and knickknacks, unnecessary furniture, and useless curtains or hangings at doors and windows. She can give away or sell things she doesn't need but somebody else could use. Most important of all, she can see that she has plenty of shelves, drawers, and closets to put things away in so they won't be scattered around. It's hard on things to be strewn about, and it's hard on the looks of a room, too. They say "a place for everything is a good way to keep everything in its place."

If a home doesn't have enough storage space, a woman 'handy' with a saw and hammer, or who can draft her husband or sons to help her, can make plenty of shelves



and cupboards herself. A Montana woman who didn't have a closet for her children's bedroom got busy and made one. She built it from fruit crates and old lumber. She put shelves in one end for hats and shoes and fixed two clothes rods from a couple of old broomsticks which she suspended from the ceiling with wire fastened to "loop-end" screws. Lastly, she papered the inside of the closet with heavy wrapping paper, and the outside with wall paper to match the rest of the room. She hung a cretonne curtain across the front for a door.

You know, on this matter of keeping a home neat and clean, it's a fine idea to have the whole family cooperating. "Mother" can't pick up after everybody, and she shouldn't if she could. Every child in the house should be trained to take care of his own things, and put away toys and hang up clothing. Also, everybody should remember to put chairs back in their places, straighten up the couch, fold up newspapers, or put books or magazines where they belong.

Another thing about 'preventive housecleaning' is that you never let your house get very mussed up or upset. You clean and straighten a little all the time - you do some jobs every day, some once a week, some once a month, and almost nothing once a year. Every day you dust furniture and floors, and sweep walks and porches to keep dirt out of the house and save rugs, varnish, or wax. Once a week, maybe you dust pictures and mirrors, brush out window sills, clean stove burners, and mop or sweep out closets.

Once a month you wipe baseboards with a damp cloth, wash a few windows, turn mattresses, launder some curtains, clean out some dresser drawers. Only twice a year, do you reserve a little time to put away winter things and get out summer things, or the other way around. But you never have that all-out back-breaking job of general housecleaning once a year.

At least that's the way a lot of women like to plan their work....and maybe you do too.

